

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEHRAN 08487 220947Z

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S E C R E T TEHRAN 8487

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS 1
TAGS: PFOR, IR, UR, LY
SUBJ: SOVIET DEMARCHE TO SHAH

1. DURING AUDIENCE MORNING AUGUST 22 JUST PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTING ON INSPECTION TOUR OF AZERBAIJAN, SHAH INFORMED ME THAT SOVIET AMBASSADOR VLADIMIR EROFEEV HAD CALLED UPON HIM SATURDAY TO PRESENT AN 8-PAGE DOCUMENT WHICH CONSISTED OF "SERMONS AND ADMONITIONS" ABOUT IRANIAN ARMS PURCHASES. THE SHAH STATED THAT THE RUSSIAN MATERIAL MADE "FULL USE OF THE HUMPHREY SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT" ON US MILITARY SALES TO IRAN. THIS SOVIET APPROACH FOLLOWED ON PRIME MINISTER KOWYGIN'S ADMONITIONS TO PRIME MINISTER HOVEYDA DURING THE LATTER'S STOPOVER IN MOSCOW ON HIS WAY BACK FROM OUTER MONGOLIA LAST MONTH.

2. THE SHAH WAS PARTICULARLY STRUCK BY THE EMPHASIS WHICH THE SOVIET APPROACH PLACED ON THE FACT THAT IRAN IS "BUYING SHIPS". AS THE SHAH POINTED OUT TO ME, PLANES MIGHT FLY OVER THE SOVIET UNION, MISSILES MIGHT BE FIRED INTO THE SOVIET UNION, BUT THERE IS NO WAY FOR IRANIAN SHIPS TO HARM THE RUSSIAN HEARTLAND. HE SURMISED THAT THE REASON FOR THE SOVIET EMPHASIS WAS THAT THEY DID NOT WANT TO HAVE IRANIAN NAVAL COMPETITION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. "IT IS QUITE NORMAL FOR THE SOVIETS TO GIVE NAVAL VESSELS TO THE INDIANS," THE SHAH NOTED RHETORICALLY. "IT IS QUITE NORMAL FOR THE SOVIETS TO BUILD BASES IN SOMALIA AND TO GIVE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TEHRAN 08487 220947Z

ARMS TO MOZAMBIQUE AND OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES, BUT THEY

FIND IT ABNORMAL THAT IRAN SHOULD BE BUYING SHIPS AND BUILDING A NAVY."

3. AT THIS JUNCTURE THE SHAH REFERRED TO LIBYAN COLONAL MU'AMMAR QADHAFI'S OUTBURST AT THE COLOMBO NONALIGNED CONFERENCE AGAINST IRAN'S ALLEGED "OCCUPATION OF THE SOUTHERN SECTION OF THE ARAB PENINSULA". THE SHAH'S VIEWS OF THIS EPISODE IS PRESENTED IN THE AUGUST 22 EDITION OF KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL UNDER A HEADLINE WHICH READS, "QADHAFI'S TIRADE WAS COMMUNIST DICTATED". THE ARTICLE ITSELF, AFTER DESCRIBING WHAT QADHAFI HAD SAID IN HIS SPEECH, STATES, "IN TEHRAN QADHAFI'S STATEMENTS WERE TAKEN AS CONCRETE PROOF THAT THE NONALIGNED CONFERENCE WAS BEING USED BY BIG-POWER BLOCS TO PROMOTE PARTISAN VIEWS AND THAT QADHAFI'S FANATICISM WAS MOVING DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO MENTAL DERANGEMENT, AND OF HIS INTENTION TO EXPORT TERRORISM WHEREVER HE CAN. VETERAN OBSERVERS SAID THAT QADHAFI'S STATEMENTS AGAINST IRAN ON ITS CONTERINSURGENCY COMMITMENT IN DHOFAR WERE FAR MORE SWEEPING THAN THOSE EARLIER MADE BY SOUTH YEMEN PRESIDENT SALIM ALI ROBEA... FROM A BROADER VIEW, THE OBSERVERS SAID, IT WAS SAD TO SEE A SO-CALLED NONALIGNED MOVEMENT TURNED INTO A FORUM FOR THE MOST FLAGRANT VIOLATIONS OF ITS VERY PRINCIPLES." (COMMENT: THE SHAH IS FULLY PERSUADED THAT THE SOVIET UNION ORCHESTRATED THE NONALIGNED CONFERENCE IN COLOMBO AND THAT THE PRINCIPAL RESOLUTIONS DEVELOPED AT THE CONFERENCE SUPPORT THE COMMUNIST LINE. HE NOTED PARTICULARLY THE TONE ADOPTED ON BEHALF OF NORTH KOREA.)

4. THE SHAH SAID THAT HIS REPLY TO AMBASSADOR EROFEEV'S APPROACH WAS ALSO LONG WELL-KNOWN LINES. HE REFERRED TO HIS PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENTS AT NOWSHAHR ON AUGUST WHEN HE POINTED OUT THAT IRAN COULD NOT STAND FOR ANY FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN BALUCHISTAN, THAT AS A SOVEREIGN POWER IRAN HAD EVERY RIGHT TO ARM ITSELF, AND THAT THE SOVIET UNION COULD HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM A COUNTRY WHICH IS SO MUCH SMALLER. THE SHAH ALSO DREW ATTENTION TO THE MASSIVENESS OF SOVIET MILITARY POWER IN ALL FIELDS. THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR INDICATED THAT HE DID NOT APPRECIATE THE SHAH'S ATTITUDE OR RESPONSE. THE SHAH COUNTERED BY SAYING THAT HE DID NOT FOR A MOMENT LIKE BEING SUBJECTED TO THIS SOVIET DEMARCHE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 TEHRAN 08487 220947Z

5. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE AUDIENCE THE SHAH WENT OVER WITH ME AGAIN, AS HE HAS DONE FREQUENTLY DURING THESE PAST FEW MONTHS, HIS CONCERN THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD STAND UP TO ITS RESPONSIBILITIES AND NOT FORGET HOW IMPORTANT THE PERSIAN GULF AREA IS TO THE ENTIRE FREE WORLD (CF. TEHRAN 6934 NOTAL).
HELMS

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